**Caring for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer**

***Conceptual Terms***

**Sex:** An identity, derived from anatomical or biological features

**Gender:** Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women

**Gender Identity**: An identity, derived from the individual’s internal sense of gender, which may or may not correspond to a person’s body or designated sex at birth

**Gender Expression:** External manifestation of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through masculine, feminine or gender-variant behavior/characteristics

**Sexual Orientation:** An individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to the same and/or opposite gender. Distinct from gender identity and expression

**Sexual Preference:** What a person prefers to do sexually, conscious recognition/choice not to be confused with orientation

***Definitions***

**Transgender:** Broad term describing people whose gender identity differs from that assigned at birth. Umbrella term includes people who are transsexual, cross-dressers or gender non-conforming, irrespective of sexual orientation.

**Transsexual:** A person whose internal sense of gender identity differs from their physical sex. Often medical term describing people whose gender and sex do not line up, who often seek medical treatment to bring their body and gender identity into alignment. Not all desire surgery.

**Gender Transition:** Process through which a person modifies their physical characteristics and/or gender expression to be consistent with their gender identity: includes hormone therapy, sex-reassignment surgery, other components generally conducted by medical professionals

**Gender Non-Conforming:** Someone who doesn’t conform to expectations of gender expression based on the gender binary (masculine and feminine) or how they should identify their gender

**Genderqueer:** Individuals who identify as between genders, or as neither man nor woman or both.

**Intersex:** A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male

**Queer:** Un umbrella term to refer to all LGBTIQ people. “A political statement and sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing sexual orientation and gender identity as fluid.” Has been used hatefully in the past.

**Cross-Dresser:** Wears clothing associated with another gender. Usually don’t seek to change their physical characteristics permanently or live full-time as the opposite gender

**Gender Identity Disorder:** Controversial DSM-IV dx given to transgender or other gender-nonconforming people

**Male to Female (MTF)/transgender woman, Female to Male (FTM)/transgender man**

**Some LGBTQI Health Issues:**

* **Abuse:** victims of physical assaults/hate crimes
* **Substance Abuse:** higher than in general population
* **Raising Families:** may have unique fertility concerns
* **Domestic Violence:** Similar rates among same-sex couple but screened less
* **Suicide and Depression:** Almost 1/3 all adolescent male suicide attempts linked to a crisis over sexual orientation
* **STI’s:** Offer screening for lesbians on same basis as heterosexuals, increased Hep A and B in gay males, HIV
* **Cancer:** Lesbians higher rates breast cancer, less routine screening

**Some simple Tips for Caring for LGBTQI patients**

* Always allow your patients to define to you the way they see their identity, without making assumptions
* Use gender-neutral language (such as “partner”) when asking about sexual or relationship history
* Be aware the person might not identify as gay
* Remember medical care should focus on the body parts a person has, whether congruent with gender identity or not. For ex, a trans man may still have a cervix and need papa smears, or a trans woman most likely still has a prostate and should be screened for cancer at appropriate age

**Resources for Contra Costa County**

* Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County

<http://www.rainbowcc.org>, 2118 Willow Pass Rd, #500, Concord, 925-692-0090

Offers a variety of support groups, group activities, discussion groups/forum on political issues relating to the LGBTQQI and a peer support for LGBTQQI

* RYSE Youth Center

<http://www.rysecenter.org>, 205 41st Richmond, 510-374-3401

Provides a safe and welcoming space for young people, 14-21

**Search for LGBTQI friendly health centers/resources near you:**

* www.LGBTCenters.org; www.GLMA.org; www.GLBTNearMe.org

*Resources:*

-Human Rights Campaign: [www.hrc.com](http://www.hrc.com)

-UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center

-AMSA LGBT Health Action Committee: [www.amsa.org/gender](http://www.amsa.org/gender)

-Gay and Lesbian Medical Association: www.glma.org